



Los Angeles County
Sheriff's Department
Sheriff's Headquarters Bureau

(323) 267-4800
www.lasd.org

Leroy D. Baca, Sheriff

Press Release

Sheriff Baca's remarks:

Poverty and crime in the same place is a formula for social failure. Poor people are entitled to live in peace. Any attention I can bring to our poor citizens is important and will challenge all of us to be more charitable. Civil rights are not a threat to law enforcement but the essence of law enforcement. Protecting one's civil rights is the pathway to a safer community.

Along those lines, the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department has the most comprehensive civil rights oversight system of any law enforcement agency in the United States.

For the past ten years, former Assistant U.S. Attorney Michael Gennaco has served as the Chief Attorney of the Los Angeles County Office of Independent Review (O.I.R.) of the Sheriff's Department. Mr. Gennaco's previous position with the U.S. Attorney's Office was as the Chief Attorney over the Civil Rights Office in Los Angeles. The six civil rights attorneys within the Office of Independent Review have unrestricted oversight to the Sheriff's Department's two investigative bureaus: the Internal Affairs Bureau and the Internal Criminal Investigations Bureau. Moreover, all operational divisions cooperate with the O.I.R.'s oversight responsibilities.

Concerning civil rights, Constitutional policing became a priority for me when I was sworn into office in 1998. Moreover, I have written extensively about public trust policing, transparency, and accountability. I have also supported a second level of examination of the Sheriff's Department's policies and procedures through special independent counsel Merrick Bobb.

About two months ago, we learned of the lawsuit filed against the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale alleging harassment of Section 8 residents. Although the Sheriff's Department was not named in the case as a defendant, I asked my staff to evaluate our role in assisting Housing Authority investigators. That role has primarily consisted of providing security for Housing Authority investigators during their compliance checks, allowing investigators to accompany deputies during probation or parole searches of Section 8 homes, and conducting fraud investigations. Together with attorneys from the O.I.R., we proactively developed protocols for future interactions with Housing Authority investigators.



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These protocols address community concerns about Section 8 enforcement and clearly define the role of Sheriff's Department personnel when requested to provide security for Housing Authority investigators conducting compliance checks at Section 8 residences.

The Sheriff's Department welcomes the Civil Rights Division's inquiry into the enforcement practices of the Housing Authority's Section 8 program. My support for transparency in the interest of the public requires me to share the Sheriff's Department's reports and proposed protocols regarding the issues that may be of concern to the public and the Civil Rights Division.

Our Core Values, adhered to by all members of the Sheriff's Department, including me, are as follows:

As a leader in the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, I commit myself to honorably perform my duties with respect for the dignity of all people,

integrity to do right and fight wrongs,

wisdom to apply common sense and fairness in all that I do, and

courage to stand against racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, homophobia and bigotry in all its forms.

On behalf of the public, I am releasing all the information we have collected to date regarding my deputies' involvement with Housing Authority's Section 8 investigators.

Additionally, I am releasing all information I have received regarding the arrests of individuals on charges relating to obstructing or interfering with the duties of a peace officer.

My office, the Office of Independent Review, and the County's special counsel will assist the Civil Rights Division in acquiring any additional information requested.

In closing, the Sheriff's Department has as a tradition worked closely with diverse populations and welcomes any suggestions for improvement in our policies, practices, and operations.